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AUTHOR Sizemore, Barbara A.
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ABSTRACT

This executive summary provides background information and a brief overview of a study conducted to determine the organizational factors that produced high reading and mathematics achievement in a majority of students in three predominantly poor and black elementary schools. Six organizational factors and 12 functional routines that were found to be most important in maintaining the "anomaly" of a high achieving, predominantly black school are enumerated. The implications of these findings are then considered in regard to (1) decentralization of authority, (2) horizontal organization, (3) special education, (4) black history, literature, and culture, (5) teaching and classroom management, and (6) school-parent-community relationships. Finally, differences in these areas among the three schools studied are discussed. (GC)

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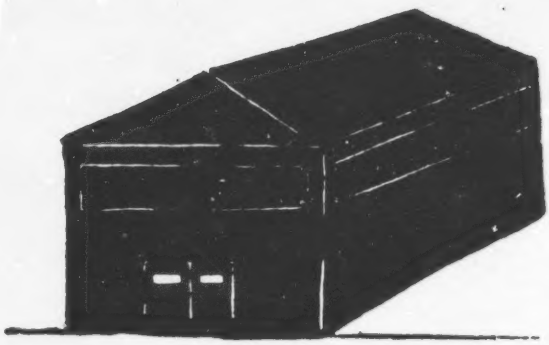
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



AN ABASHING ANOMALY: THE HIGH ACHIEVING PREDOMINANTLY BLACK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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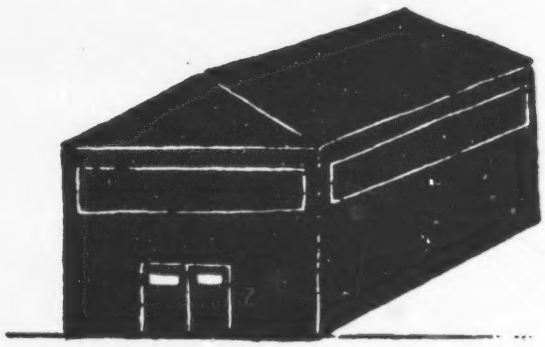

Barbara A. Sizemore
Principal Investigator
Department of Black Community,
Education, Research and Development
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260

Carlos A. Brossard
Department of Black Community,
Education, Research, and Development
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260

Birney Harrigan
Department of Anthropology
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260

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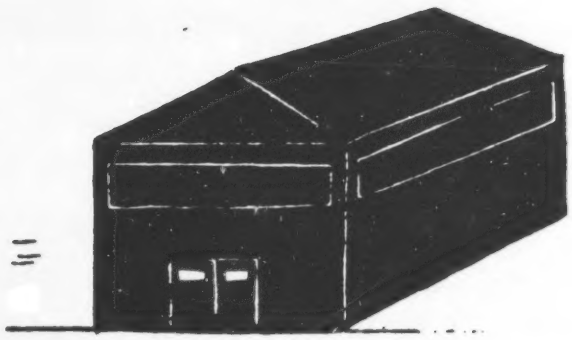

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Grant Application No. 9-0172
Barbara A. Sizemore Principal Investigator
Department of Black Community, Education, Research and Development
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260
January, 1983

ABSTRACT

AN ABASHING ANOMALY: THE HIGH ACHIEVING PREDOMINANTLY BLACK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The high achieving black school is an abashing anomaly in any public school system and not the result of ordinary organizational routines. The National Institute of Education funded this study in 1979 to investigate the organizational factors important to producing a quality education in three predominantly black poor elementary schools, K-5. Schools were classified as high achieving when the majority of their students received scores on the Metropolitan Achievement Test in reading and mathematics at or above the national and/or city norms 50 percent of the time or more during the five year period, 1975-1980. Nonparticipant observation was the primary technique supplemented by the study of documents and school routines through the lens of the Organizational Process Model which emphasizes organizational output. Nonparticipant observation was operationalized through ethnography, the task of describing these school cultures exemplified by the knowledge of the actors used to generate and interpret their social behavior. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with principals and teachers to determine goal consensus and to parents to discover their opinions. These data were then cross-checked against the observations.

The findings indicate that these anomalies were set in motion by the selection of moderately authoritarian principals who: (1) generated a climate of high expectations for student performance; (2) mobilized consensus among school and community actors around high achievement as the highest priority goal; (3) chose functional routines; and (4) demonstrated a willingness to disagree with superior officers around these choices. The most important functional routines were: (1) the assumption of responsibility for student discipline, attendance and parental conflict through the publication of procedures enforced by selective sanctions; (2) the supervision of teacher and staff performances by daily visitations, private conferences, prompt evaluations and the provision of assistance; (3) the consistent monitoring of students' skill mastery progress and using of teacher expertise for problem directed searches; (4) the involvement of parents as an instructional support group; (5) the establishment of the school's office as a central command post; (6) the use of skill mastery grouping based on criterion referenced tests as a means of placing students in self-contained classrooms modified by some nongrading and team teaching; (7) the expansion of the school day by using subject, preparation, and after school periods for reinforcement; (8) the denial of student placement in mentally retarded divisions until the entire teaching repertoire had been exhausted; and (9) the refusal of additional programs whose administration would consume regular school program time.

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Sizemore
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260
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Barbara A. Sizemore
Principal Investigator
Department of Black Community, Education, Research and Development
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260

Carlos A. Brossard
Department of Black Community, Education, Research and Development
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260

Birney Harrigan
Department of Anthropology
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260

The high achieving black school is an abashing anomaly in any public school system and not the result of ordinary organizational routines. In fact, it forces the system to explain the existence of low achieving black schools and raises questions about standard operating procedures and policies which allow such schools to operate. The National Institute of Education (NIE) funded this study in SY 1979-1980 to investigate the organizational factors important to producing a quality education in three predominantly black and poor elementary schools, kindergarten through fifth grade, in the Centre City School System (CCSS). Of the twenty-one 70 percent or more black elementary schools, only five were high achieving as reflected by reading and mathematics scores on the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT) exceeding or reaching the national and/or city norms received by more than a majority of the students in the school (at least 51 percent). Students were not tested in kindergarten, therefore, there were five grade equivalent mean scores for each school in reading and five for each in mathematics or 10 for each year. Over the five year period beginning with SY1975-1976 and ending with SY1979-1980, out of 50 possible grade equivalent mean scores, one of the three schools scored 46; the second, 31; and the third, 23. This means that the first school achieved a grade equivalent mean score at or above the national and/or city norm 46 times out of the 50 possibilities. The lowest achieving

predominantly black school in the CCSS achieved only three grade equivalent mean scores at or above the national and/or city norms out of the 50. During the study year, the second school achieved a grade equivalent mean score at or above the national and/or city norms in 10 out of 10 possible grade mean scores. This school was indeed an abashing anomaly. Of these three study schools, the outcome in two was high achievement and high growth in both reading and mathematics. In the third, the outcome was high achievement and high growth in mathematics, but low achievement and high growth in reading.

Nonparticipant observation was the primary technique supplemented by the study of documents, materials, records and reports which were used to examine the routines, scenarios and processes of the school through the lens of Graham T. Allison's Organizational Process Model (OPM) which empnasizes organizational output and is used to discern the behaviors the organizational components exhibit in the implementation process in terms of outputs delivered in routines, scenarios and processes. A routine is a series of repetitive activities which are related to a goal such as high achievement in reading. A scenario is a series of routines. A process is a series of scenarios. This model permitted the study of organizational routines, scenarios and processes which produced the output of high achievement and of this puzzling occurrence with ethnography.

Each school in this study represented a general style of life for the culture exhibited by the actors in the environment. Ethnography is the task of describing these cultures exemplified by the knowledge of the school actors used to generate and interpret their social behavior, not only from the investigators' points of view but also from the school actors' points of view. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers to determine goal consensus and to parents to discover their opinions about their school's achievement. These data were cross-checked with observations.

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Sizemore
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260

The Study Questions

This study attempted to answer two questions: (1) What organizational factors produced high achievement in reading and mathematics in three predominantly black elementary schools as reflected by the attainment of scores on standardized tests at or above the national and/or city norms by a majority of the student body of the school? and (2) What were the differences between the study schools, if any? Following will be a summary of the findings and a discussion of what we think these findings mean.

The Setting for the Creation of the Anomaly

These anomalies were set in motion by the following organizational factors:

1. The recruitment and selection of a moderately authoritarian principal who believed that black poor students could and would learn.

2. The willingness of this principal to risk differing with the system's norm of low achievement for black poor schools. He or she dared to be different in order to create the anomaly.

3. The mobilization of consensus among school and community actors around high achievement as the highest priority goal.

4. The generation of a climate of high expectations for student achievement conducive to teaching and learning.

5. The choice of functional routines, scenarios and processes for the achievement of this highest priority.

6. The willingness to disagree with superior officers around the choices of these routines and their implementation.

The Essential Functional Routines

The organizational output depends on the routines, scenarios and processes in place at the time. The following seem to be the most important in maintaining the anomaly of a high achieving predominantly black elementary school.

1. The assumption of responsibility for all student discipline, attendance and parental conflict through the publication of processes to be followed when violations, infractions or confrontations occurred and prompt enforcement of the same with selective sanctions.

2. The rigorous supervision of teacher and staff performance and daily visitations of classrooms and programs.

3. The consistent monitoring of students' reading and mathe-mathics skill mastery process.

4. The use of staff and teacher expertise, skills information and knowledge to conduct problem directed searches for the resolution of school concerns and dilemmas.

5. The involvement of parents in some participatory and meaningful way in the school's program.

6. The prompt evaluation of teacher and staff performances and the provision of assistance, help and in-service where necessary; however, the rating of performances as unsatisfactory where warranted, including persuading such teachers to transfer in spite of central office resistance.

7. The establishment of the school's office as the central business command post by communicating routines which control information and coordinate school activities.

8. The implementation of a horizontal organization based on some kind of reading skill mastery grouping determined by criterion referenced tests with no more than three reading groups per class within which arrangement grouping and re-grouping for mathematics is permitted; teacher assignments are dictated by teacher expertise with a particular kind of learner rather than on teacher desire; self-contained classrooms modified by some kind of nongrading and team teaching are the norm; a reading clinician provides support for the diagnosis of student problems related to pacing and progress; and classroom structures are high but moderated by affection and consideration.

9. The expansion of the school day by using prep, ESEP*, special subject, social studies and science periods for tutoring and small group instruction for students who need reinforcement, re-teaching and remediation and an increase in student attendance patterns.

*Essential Staff Education Practice

10. The demand for the use of materials which prove functional for elevating achievement when such are not approved by the Board of Education, especially in the areas of phonics, Black History, Culture and Literature and mathematics word problems.

11. The denial of student placement in EMR*divisions unless all strategies for regular learning occur and have been exhausted.

12. The refusal to accept system programs which consume administration and supervision time normally given to the regular program.

What Are The Implications?

For many these findings probably seem simple and direct. They may wonder why principals would have to take a risk to create a high achieving school and why they would have to disagree with superiors in order to acquire functional materials and establish functional routines. Some of these differences result from the negotiation away of principals' prerogatives in teacher union contracts. Others result from the system's belief in the inferiority of black people and the inability of these students to learn in the regular school program. Historically and commonly, the decision-making in school systems has been and continues to be hierarchical. Boards of Education set policy and superintendents determine programs and directives. Lower administrative echelons are informed and held accountable for implementation. Generally, teachers are involved through their unions or educational associations and parents and students are excluded from this decision-making. Actually, the community control movement resulted from such exclusion, and black parents saw principals and teachers as the key personnel in the educational performance of their children. They wanted to hold these personnel accountable and consequently sought the power to fire and hire them. The teachers' unions won this battle, but the need for the decentralization of authority remained, especially for schools serving black poor populations.

The Decentralization of Authority

Two principals in this study reflect this need and sought to fill it by exerting their own hierarchical independence. They were loosely coupled with central office, and they decided that they would make the decisions about how their schools operated.

*Educable Mentally Retarded

Within the constraints of the administrative structure of the CCSS, they were willing to take the risk of non-promotion and censure. In effect, they decentralized the CCSS by flattening the decision-making base and usurping some administrative prerogatives reserved for their superiors. In exchange for the loyalty and support of their teachers, these principals assumed the responsibility for student discipline and parental conflict. They made attempts to share their influence and power with parents and teachers who worked with them for goal achievement, thereby generating consensus.

The routines which they implemented profoundly affected the curriculum designed by the Board of Public Education (BPE). For example, they used materials rejected by the BPE because these materials proved most effective with their black students. They used teaching positions for functions no longer approved by the BPE because these functions were needed to elevate achievement for their students. They encouraged parents to protest system practices and policies perceived by them as unfair and/or unjust. They emphasized flexible time sequences, permitting teachers to use special subject, prep, Essential Staff Education (ESEP), social studies and science periods for reinforcement and re-teaching in defiance of BPE rules and union contracts. They discouraged teachers from dumping black poor slow learners in Educable Mentally Retarded (EMR) classes until they were certain that such a placement was educationally sound. These principals evaluated their teachers after strictly monitoring their performances based on student achievement, growth and progress. When teachers failed to improve, the principals urged them to transfer or receive an unsatisfactory rating. Because of the loyalty, solidarity and consensus among the other teachers, unsatisfactory teachers generally chose to leave.

Hierarchical independence was exhibited by both of these principals in the highest achieving study schools. This suggests that principals need more decentralized authority in decision-making over curriculum defined as everything which is taught, how it is taught and how this is all managed and administered in a school. However, all principals do not have the same dedication, commitment, skills and knowledge. Since no two schools are alike either, no one management scheme will fit all cases and apply equally to every situation. For example the Superintendent implemented a research-based supervisory model in SY 1981-1982. This program requires the principal, after training in the model, to make three teacher visits per week, to make an anecdotal record of each visit and to hold a conference with the teacher subsequently in order to improve instruction. Moreover, each principal had to implement the model's training program which required teaching the

model guidelines to the faculty. These guidelines concerned lesson planning, classroom management and lesson presentation. Teachers were to demonstrate the model to the principal after the training. Certainly some principals need this training, but such a model hardly seems right for one study school where the teachers had been working together for 16 years and whose principal knew each one well and where the achievement scores of a majority of the students had exceeded or reached the national and/or city norms for at least seven years. If the model had been research-based, it should have emerged from the data provided by these exceptional school actors. Here is a principal who has been making daily visitations, now told to reduce that to three per week. Here are teachers who are experts in classroom management, lesson planning and presentation forced to consume their time with a model which may be less effective than what they are already doing.

While the performances of principals should be improved and evaluated on a more consistent basis using student achievement as one important criterion, more study must be made of the individual school units to determine what kind of help these leaders need. Where the principals exhibit sharp skills and expertise in the elevation of achievement especially with hard-to-reach populations, more decision-making authority should be given to them around curriculum, teacher recruitment and assignment, teacher evaluation and transfer and parental involvement and participation. Additionally, these principals need to be directly involved in goal setting and planning for other similar schools and in the determination of the horizontal and vertical organizations. A mutuality of effort among parents, administrators, community, teachers and students is absolutely necessary to set and subsequently achieve educational goals in a coherent and orderly fashion; therefore, every support should be given to principals seeking to build this kind of consensus in their school communities. Once these principals and schools are identified, research units could be placed in them to observe, study and analyze the routines, scenarios and processes employed to elevate achievement and improve instruction. This would produce a real research based supervisory model.

For example, the Superintendent implemented a mathematics monitoring achievement program during SY 1981-1982. Students were pretested and posttested on prearranged skills. Between testings, teachers were instructed to teach the designated skills. Such a program had been in effect at two study schools for several years. A Teacher Corps' project stressing learning mathematics skills was conducted at the third during the study year. Yet, when the Superintendent's "new" program began, these schools were involved in it on the most elementary level as though their programs had never existed. Moreover, during the dispute over phonics among school

board members in SY 1982-1983, little attention was given the success of one study school with its phonics program, and when pilot schools were chosen, its history was ignored.

These observations seem to point toward a tendency to hide the high achieving black schools; to ignore their contributions to teaching and learning; and to pretend that they simply do not exist. To admit their presence is too embarrassing, an open admission that the decision to improve the quality of instruction for black students is a political decision and not an educational one. The fact is that much is already known about how to elevate achievement in the black poor learner. The problem is that the commitment to do so may not be there. Unless this commitment is accepted, the imputation of black inferiority will continue and low achievement will remain the norm in black schools.

Perhaps the political effect of the 1982 State Human Relations Commission's amendments to the Centre City Desegregation Plan calling for the improvement of instruction at the remaining segregated black schools will hasten a change in the present attitude toward the exceptional high achieving schools. Somehow, sometime, somewhere better efforts must be made by school systems to recruit and hire teachers and principals who believe that black poor students can and will learn. Unless school actors have high expectations for students, their potentials will not be reached. As a matter of fact, teachers who do not believe that their students can and will learn, stop teaching them. Goal displacement occurs and discipline or growth replaces achievement as desired ends. Principals and teachers who believe that the students can and will learn, look at system practices and policies for answers when achievement does not occur rather than projecting these failures on the victims, the students and/or their parents. Since the principal must mobilize consensus among the school actors and maintain high expectations, he/she should have more say about who comes into teaching and certainly who stays there. School board members and central office administrators should not bargain away these principals' prerogatives with teachers' unions.

The Horizontal Organization: Dealing With Human Difference

Every school has two kinds of organization: (1) the horizontal which is the plan for placing children in groups for the reception of instruction, and (2) the vertical which is concerned with moving the students from entry to exit. There are several ways to group students horizontally. One way is the age-graded structure wherein children are placed into grades according to age. Another is placement according to homogeneous achievement as reflected by standardized achievement tests or according to ability as shown by intelligence tests.

This is called tracking or streaming. A third way is to place students according to individual need by skill mastery or deficiency. A fourth way is by random selection.[1] In the schools in this study students were placed in grades according to age and skill mastery in reading as reflected by the Ginn 360 or 720 Level Tests. Students were tracked into the Elementary Scholars' Program (ESP) and EMR.

Teachers in these high achieving schools did not use the norm referenced standardized tests for teaching. Rather, they used the criterion referenced tests provided by the Ginn and Lippincott series in reading and the Heath series in mathematics. They did not judge their students' growth in achievement by the standardized test. They insisted on the mastery of procedural knowledge (learning skills such as how to read, write, compute) as well as on propositional knowledge (learning information such as knowledge about the earth). The emphasis, however, was on procedural knowledge.[2]

There did not seem to be a high correlation between the achievement of students in the basal reader and the scores on the standardized tests. In other words, the criterion referenced reading level and unit tests reflected or not the mastery of the specified skills, but the success of a student at a certain level did not necessarily predict what the grade equivalent score would be on the standardized test in reading. It is not clear then that what the publisher says should be taught in a grade matches the grade equivalent on the standardized test. Students who have strong skill mastery records, however, do make higher scores. Teachers believe this is due to reinforcement, repetition and re-teaching. Moreover, grouping for reading is an instructional fundamental for handling the extensive human variation that occurs among students in learning. This grouping also seems to facilitate the learning of mathematics since the only school to use this routine managed to lift 81 percent of its student body to or above the national and/or city norms. Since every human being is different and since it is fiscally impossible to hire a tutor for each student, grouping, small and large, should be planned for in school schedules.

Another routine utilized to account for human variation in learning and implemented in these schools is the inter-room transfer of students whose reading groups are unavailable in their own grade placement. This is a form of the nongrading concept. It is evident that teachers try to modify the scheduling of students to account for the phenomenon of human difference in growth and achievement. What teachers in these three schools try to do is to create multi-modal, multi-level groupings for more effective instruction. Modes concern styles of learning;levels refer to skill placement. Even more flexibility in scheduling is attained through the use of team

teaching which was practiced in all three schools to some extent. In this routine teachers who specialized in certain areas or subjects could teach several groups of students. These teachers worked together as a team and shared information, knowledge and skills. This practice was exceedingly beneficial at one school in the second grade and in mathematics in the departmental group. Attempts at another school were less fruitful. Nevertheless, the practice of departmentalization needs more investigation. Its restriction on the manipulation of class time and usage precludes the expansion of the school schedule to accommodate slow learners. On the other hand, it permits the utilization of teacher subject matter expertise at a time when the elementary school curriculum expands (Grades 4 and 5). The advantages and disadvantages need to be examined and weighed in some future research.

In any event, schools servicing black poor students should provide a horizontal organization which allows for large and small groupings. Knowledge, according to Olson, is defined in terms of statements and propositions and is communicable by definition. While knowledge may be represented in abstract symbolic forms such as sentences, which because of their symbolic structure can be conveyed through the mass media, skills cannot be so conveyed. Small groupings will be necessary for teaching skills which are located primarily in the motor system and are private.[3] The horizontal organization in all three schools failed to provide enough of these opportunities. Hence, teachers and principals were forced to create them. This they did by extending the students' day past dismissal, by denial of attendance in special subject classes, by using teachers' prep, ESEP and lunch periods, by sending students who failed to perform to the principal for extended work time and by monitoring student attendance.

Teachers were tightly coupled with the principal in the two highest achieving schools in a mutual and reciprocal relationship. They made important decisions in their classrooms around teacher use of expertise, student placement and progress, curriculum interventions, such as the use of Lippincott readers and the administration of Ginn Level Tests to incoming transfer students. These teachers took certain risks by violating their union contract and by usurping parental rights. However, it was their very dependence on the principals for support in negotiating problems arising from these actions that encouraged them to take the risks in the first place. The tendency of the principals to rely on teachers as resources for problem solving in the school gave them status and made them an integral part of the administrative and supervision process further tightening the coupling.

Language (words), music (notes,) art (images) and mathematics (numbers) are symbol systems.[4] Yet, hierarchical skills are organized in reading and mathematics but not in music and art since standardized tests are not given in these subjects. This is an unfortunate problem in the study schools, since teachers do not have enough time to meet the needs of students on slower learning cycles. They must steal time from vocal and instrumental music, art, drama, poetry, dance, social studies, science, library and physical education. Teachers regret this practice but see no alternative. Even though principals and teachers managed to produce very professional programs and plays such as "The Wiz", "Grease" and "Barnum" during the school year, teachers consider special subjects, social studies and science less important than reading and mathematics. Black and poor students need school experience in these special subjects; and some means of providing more time in terms of a longer school day should be studied for schools servicing black poor students even though it will cost more money.

It is clear from research that spending equal amounts of money on children does not provide an equality of opportunity. Some pupils begin their schooling with more physical disabilities and less psychological preparation for adjusting to the procedures of formal education. If we expect the results of school to provide equal opportunities in later life, then greater schooling resources should be given to those who begin with disadvantages."[5] Consequently, from an educational point of view equalization would require bringing all schools up to a standard rather than depriving any school of the resources necessary for providing an adequate educational program for the students attending. It means, further, that the education of some students would require spending more in order to provide them equal educational opportunity

Special Education

Special education classes represent a tracking mechanism for students who have special needs which cannot be met in the regular classroom; consequently, these services must be provided in another setting. Unfortunately, in two study schools, these students were isolated from the main student body and mainstreaming depended on teacher ingenuity and persistence. We need to re-think the conceptualization of special education. These services need to be synthesized with the needs of students rather than the needs of the system, i.e. removing a discipline case from a room. For instance, any child or every child may need special education at one time or another such as tutoring for a student having difficulty with geometry.

More flexible horizontal organization will create more chances for dealing with these kinds of needs. Special Education needs to be planned accordingly.

Better diagnostic testing is required to be certain that students need special education. Reliance on intelligence tests channel many deprived and disadvantaged youngsters into these programs when they really do not belong there. Yet, the failure to diagnose early leads to failure and frustration of students and teachers alike. The return of a position like a reading clinician could work toward the achievement of this end. More counseling and guidance personnel at the elementary school level could help redirect school policy in special education referral systems also.

Black History, Literature and Culture

All three schools displayed pictures of black men and women who had made major contributions to American life on the walls of the school building i.e., Martin Luther King, Jr., Harriet Tubman, Mary McLeod Bethune, George Washington Carver, and Frederick Douglass. Additionally, two schools stressed the importance of the study of Black History, Literature and Culture everyday in lessons and work materials. Black picture alphabets hung on the walls; pictures of black and white girls and boys illustrated posters and bulletin boards. Library books about black people and black life were abundant. Black music and black art were taught. Students were surrounded by this culture and life.

Teaching and Classroom Management

Most black students fail to reach much less exceed the national and/or city norms in reading and mathematics on the standardized achievement tests. Certainly learning to master reading and mathematics skills is not quality education; yet, quality education, whatever it is, can not be attained unless the students can read, write and compute. A school must first meet these prerequisites, hopefully, in the early grades. Nor do scores on standardized achievement tests necessarily reflect a quality education when they are at or above the norms; yet, most parents and educators judge schools and educational opportunities by them.

While we believe that norm referenced tests are culturally biased and based on Anglocentric norms, we found predominantly black elementary schools where a majority of the students were scoring at or above these norms. We wanted to know why and how this anomaly occurred. Since the number system is less dependent on language cultural effects,

students in these schools scored higher in mathematics than in reading. However, some teachers felt that the mathematics scores were not true scores since the standardized test used did not include word problems to any extent. Teachers in the three study schools did not use the standardized tests for instructional purposes. Although there was a mini-testing experiment in the public schools during the study year to improve test taking skills, not many of the study school teachers participated. These teachers used the criterion referenced level and unit reading tests for determining their students' placement, progress and pace. Group assignments in class rosters were determined by these tests as was promotion. For mathematics, the textbook chapter tests provided the same information. In the kindergartens, teachers had extensive lists of skills which had to be mastered before the reading series could begin. But even the use of criterion referenced tests did not completely erase the effects of the African-American culture.

To combat the heavy cultural bias of the reading texts, teachers in the study schools relied on repetition, reinforcement, re-teaching rote and drill to overcome the disability. Where concepts were too difficult or alien, teachers simply increased the amount of time spent teaching them. In two schools a variety of activities had been accumulated for each skill, so that any student could repeat any activity several times to achieve mastery. There was a firm belief among the teachers of the highest achieving schools that a strong phonics background and word attack/analysis skill foundation was essential for black poor students whose language was basically Black English and that a reading series which provided these skills was vital. In fact, one twenty year veteran, acknowledged having served on several reading textbook committees where teachers were urged by central office personnel to choose texts other than those the teachers wanted because of certain benefits offered the school district by the publisher.

Teachers generally kept lesson plans and taught their lessons as outlined in the teachers' guide to the reading and mathematics series. Students were taken through all skills whether or not mastery had been attained. Very little pretesting occurred to determine whether or not level or unit skipping should be permitted. In the two highest achieving schools, special treatment was given advanced readers. In one, a special series was used; in the other a variety of enrichment supplementary materials was used. In both of these schools, more instructional time was given to the slow learners. In one school there was an Early Learning Skills Division for the placement of kindergarten students who had failed to master skills sufficiently well to begin the formal first grade. Only in one school was there an enrichment program for advanced math students.

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University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260

Scheduling of reading and math classes posed a problem for the Title I remediation teachers. Reading was usually taught in the morning and mathematics in the afternoon in all schools except one where there was departmentalization. Under such a schedule in schools where the Title I program is half day in the morning, students often missed their regular reading and were forced to make it up during special subject time. Only in one school was there a close relationship between the Title I curriculum and the regular reading program. In this school the Title I teacher also served as an ex-officio reading clinician, diagnosing students and assessing level and unit placements of transfer students. The same problem occurred in Title I mathematics programs.

Interestingly, in two schools the assignment of teachers to accelerated achievement level classes was rotated among the teachers in that particular grade from year to year. However, in the school where achievement was highest over the five year period from 1975 through 1980, assignments were permanent except in the second grade. In the lowest achieving study school, assignments were negotiated among the teachers and constant arguments arose during the school year about the assignment of transfer-in students. In this school the lowest achieving classes were assigned to the least experienced teachers.

These practices point toward the need for the training of teachers for permanent assignments so that yearly struggles to avoid the "ding-a-lings", as one teacher labeled the unwanted students, does not happen. Teachers could then be trained to develop the expertise to teach a certain type of learner and students would feel wanted by the teachers to whom they are assigned. Furthermore, students whose standardized test scores exceed their reading and mathematics placements could be pretested for the next level. Special treatment programs need analysis to avoid neglect of the average learner, and Title I scheduling needs more study.

The majority of the teachers in the study schools felt that they were able to accomplish high achievement in reading and mathematics because their discipline problems were minimal and the principal gave them unlimited support in that area. Without the assumption of this responsibility, these teachers would have displaced high achievement with discipline as a high priority goal. Consequently, instead of directing their energies, talents and skills toward the elevation of achievement they would have worked for an improvement in the discipline. These teachers did not depend on parents to help them to teach the children skill mastery in reading and mathematics. In fact, they considered the parents extremely handicapped in doing so. Even in the one school where parents were encouraged to monitor teacher

performance, the teachers felt that the parents had abdicated their parental obligations to the principal.

In one school teachers were more occupied with disciplinary problems than instruction. In this school, the teachers tried to work out an alliance with parents to assist them in handling the difficult cases. The many chronic behavior problems in this school further depleted the precious time available for instruction and totally consumed opportunities for extending the school day for students who were on a slow learning cycle. The data seem clear on this point. In black poor schools the principal must be aggressive in developing a system for dealing with discipline. He/she must take responsibility for the management of these problems and create more time for direct instruction. Additionally, this action generates loyalty among the teachers and a spirit of group solidarity which leads toward consensus around high achievement as a group goal.

The data are not clear around high structure and its relationship to high achievement. Since the school which had the longest and most consistent record of high achievement was highly structured one can speculate that high structure moderated by affection and consideration is probably the best mode over all for black poor students. But, more research needs to be conducted on this relationship. For high structure may result in consistent performance over time since the environment is more controlled; yet, flexible structure may result in the highest achievement at any given time since it permits more creativity. What is definite, however, is that loose structure can not produce high achievement in the black poor school. This speaks forcefully to the establishment of a strict discipline program firmly enforced in the black poor school in a considerate manner and demands a rigorous monitoring of teacher performance and compliance with the specified routines.

Parent and Community Relationships

Only in one school was the relationship of the principal and the parents a reciprocal relationship. In the other two schools, parents were clients who were expected to give the school support in exchange for the education of their children. In one of these, the role of parents was very limited and proscribed. In the other, parents were expected to help teachers with their discipline problems. In all three schools the roles of parents were dictated by the school principals, but in one school that role was expansive, instructional and participatory.

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The highest achieving school during SY 1979-1980 had the most involved parent participation program. Parents were actually encouraged to sit in classes, observe and monitor teacher performance and student learning. The principal was a social activist actually sought after by the community for leadership in certain social and political areas. He served as a father figure for many of these families and in many cases parents surrendered their parental rights to him unqualifiably. This benefit of community cohesion coupled with the loyalty, solidarity and consensus among his faculty around high achievement as the highest priority goal served to provide a foundation for the execution of an interesting form of hierarchical independence which earned the principal the disapproval of central office staff who called him a "loner," "not a team player", "independent," and "radical." This evaluation of his principalship prevented his consideration for promotion until his school became a subject of this study.

The highest achieving school over the five year period SY 1975-1976 to 1979-1980 failed to develop the kind of community cohesion which characterized the former school. Some parents disliked the high structure and formal dress code established in the school; others failed to control the behavior of their children in and out of school and protested the principal's handling of discipline from time to time. Parents desiring a more flexible arrangement sent their children to private, parochial and other public schools. In a few cases, these students actually transferred into lower achieving schools. In one case the actual classification of the student changed although the student was attending a private school; consequently, the parent returned his child to the study school. To combat this division in the community, the principal formed the School Family which was composed of the school actors, the students and the parents of the achieving readers. These parents served as buffers between the school and the opposing group.

In the third school parents played the traditional PTA role participating through this organization, cluster parent representatives, the Title I and Headstart parent groups. Teachers individually sought out parents for disciplinary support, but, generally parental involvement consisted of a small core of lunchroom aides organized around the lunchroom manager and the school principal. During the 1981 elections, this group attempted to mobilize community support for the candidate opposing the incumbent school board member for re-election. Their dismal failure revealed the extent of their representation of the actual parents of the school district. Without community and parent solidarity, lacking loyalty and consensus among the faculty, encumbered by beliefs in teacher professionalism, collegiality and specialization, the principal was tightly coupled with central office for direction, supervision and support.

The data show a need for the mobilization of consensus among parents around high achievement as the highest priority goal. Additionally, some effort must be made to incorporate them into some participatory scheme around the schools' program. The best situation is one of cohesion; where this is impossible the recruitment of a majority of the parents and community is basic. When schools fail in their basic task of instruction, the parents pick up the burden and bear the brunt. In one study school, the data seem to indicate that whatever learning occurred there during the study year was more the result of parental and home influence than school effects.

What Were The Differences Between the Schools?

The following statements describe the differences between the study schools during SY 1979-1980.

1. The highest achieving school for the study year treated parents as equals in a partnership; the other two treated them as clients who owed support in exchange for the education of the students. In the former, parents could monitor teacher performance, bring their observations to the principal and demand redress. In one of the other two, parents' roles were prescribed by the principal; in the remaining, their roles were defined by teachers.

2. In the two highest achieving schools which were more alike, there was a mid-range consensus among the school actors around high achievement as the highest priority goal; in the other there was low consensus around this goal. On other scales there was more consensus in the two more alike schools than in the third where there was a difference in the conduct and views of new and veteran teachers.

3. In the two highest achieving study schools, the principals were authoritarian although the degree differed. In the third, the principal was guided by collegiality and specialization and was firmly based in teacher professionalism and the adherence to standards.

4. The two highest achieving schools were loosely coupled with central office. Both principals were viewed as "renegades," "non-team players", "uncooperative" and "loners." The third principal was tightly coupled with central office running her school as best she knew how by the rules.

5. In the two highest achieving study schools, the principals assumed the responsibility for student discipline and parental conflict generating loyalty among their teachers through the sense of obligation engendered by the action. In the third, an undercover war was created by the principal's failure to assume this responsibility, generally led by veteran teachers.

6. In the two highest achieving study schools, the principals monitored student progress and pacing, supervised teacher performance consistently and evaluated teachers promptly. In the third, the principal relied on her supervisory specialist for assistance in evaluation and in-service and on external sources for help in supervision. In the two highest achieving schools, the principals persuaded unsatisfactory personnel to transfer under the threat of the receipt of an unsatisfactory rating rather than undergo the long, tortuous, red-tape process prescribed by the Board of Education and the Federation of Teachers (FOT). In the third, the principal was proscribed by the presence of an FOT official on her faculty and forced to submit to that process.

7. In the same manner, the third principal was constrained from using prep, special subject, social studies, science and ESEP periods for tutoring, remediation, reinforcement and re-teaching.

8. This third school had a higher faculty and student mobility and student absenteeism rate, a lower student population, a larger number of extra programs, more loosely structured classrooms, fewer poor students and a new principal compared to the other two schools. Because of its higher SES* investigators thought the achievement would be higher as an effect. This proved not to be the case. In fact, the data show a school in transition.

9. The offices of the two highest achieving schools were highly centralized characterized by a business-like atmosphere. The third school's office had more of a central social meeting place aura. It housed a soda pop machine inside the principal's office through which teachers and staff treked for purchases. Unattended student disciplinary referrals often played with messengers or student passers-by until the clerk noticed their behavior, and visitors often failed to notify the principal that they were in the school.

*socio-economic status

10. The principals of the two highest achieving schools spent a great deal of their work time interacting with students; the third principal spent her time with her own faculty and staff from central office and the university regarding the extra programs housed in her school.

11. Teachers at this third school spent more time on discipline problems in their classrooms than did the teachers in the two highest achieving schools. They were less cooperative with each other and more informal in their own behavior.

12. Only in this third school did teachers fail to teach reading and mathemathics every day, and only here did teachers interrupt each other's classes with consistent regularity for trivial reasons.

What Should Be Done Now?

Superintendents and Boards of Education need to test several policy and/or administrative propositions in order to create and maintain high achieving schools for black and poor students.

1. Designate student achievement as one of the most important criteria on which teacher and principal performance will be judged.

2. Lengthen the school day in schools where the population demands reinforcement, repetition and reteaching, pay staff accordingly and increase student attendance.

3. Require evidence that teachers can teach reading and mathematics before hiring or that principals provide proof of this ability during the probationary period using student achievement as the basic criterion in cases where probationary teachers receive satisfactory marks or better.

4. Provide probationary periods for principals and decentralize more authority at the building level for veterans but monitor these principals' performances in elevating achievement.

5. Place research teams in schools which are high achieving in hopes of increasing the knowledge base.

6. Recruit and hire more teachers and principals who believe that black and poor students can learn; make this a requirement for working in these schools.

7. Monitor more stringently the selection and purchase of textbooks and educational materials for cultural bias and selected emphases for deviant populations such as phonics, linguistics, word problems and ethnic history and culture

8. Monitor the proliferation of programs in schools which service black and poor student populations. Where these programs are desirable, principals should be given assistant principals to deal with their administration and supervision.

Notes:

1. Barbara S. Sizemore The Superintendent's 120 Day Report (Board of Education, Washington: D.C., March 8, 1974), pp. 29-31.

2. David R. Olson. "What is Worth Knowing?" School Review, (Vol. 82, No. 1, November 1973) p. 35.

3. Ibid, p. 39.

4. Ibid, p. 34.

5. Laurence Iannacone. "Problems of Financing Inner City Schools," (HEW, Office of Education, Washington, D.C., Contract #OEC-0-71-2718, Ohio State University, Research Foundation, August, 1971), p. 11.